(d) if not, the reasons for not taking up the issue of nano technology on fast track?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) to (d) The Government has already launched a Mission on Nano Science and Technology (Nano Mission) in May, 2007 with an allocation of Rs. 1000 crore for five years to promote the upcoming area of nano science and technology in the country. The Nano Mission has a management structure which ensures that efforts made by various Government departments, academic and research institutions and also the industry to promote nano science and technology are synergistic and complementary in nature and undesirable duplication of research is avoided.

As part of the Nano Mission, it is planned to launch a variety of educational and HRD programmes, Research & Development (R&D) programmes, establish centres of excellence and sophisticated characterization facilities, promote institution-industry linked projects through increased public private partnerships, promote entrepreneurship through establishment of business incubators, encourage industry to directly undertake product-oriented research projects, etc. A well-defined plan has been drawn up to promote this area of research in a comprehensive fashion involving all the players in the R&D sector.

As a result of Nano Mission activities, and also the promotional efforts made by the Government earlier, a core community of about 300 researchers and research students has been nurtured in this field. M.Sc./M.Tech. programmes in several institutions have been started, Several sophisticated characterization facilities have been established, About 20 centres of excellence have also been established in important areas such as biosensors, printable electronics, drug delivery, smart textiles, etc. The Government has spent approximately Rs. 400 crore to promote R&D in nano science and technology so far. three major centres of excellence, costing approximately Rs. 100 crore each, will also be set up shortly at Mohali, Bangalore and Kolkata. It is felt that these measures would adequately intensify R&D in nano science and technology in the country and make it internationally competitive.

Effects of rupee escalation on textile industry

3991. SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that due to recent escalation of rupee value the textile industry is affected badly;

(b) if so, the details thereof, including the effects on exports, loss of employment etc.; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to protect the small and minor cloth manufacture from these negative effects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) The Textiles trade bodies and associations have represented that the appreciation of the rupee *vis-a-vis* US dollar during 2007, has adversely affected the exports of textiles and clothing from India. However, trade statistics available for the period April-December, 2007 indicate that the overall exports at USD 14935.69 million in this period denotes an increase of 9.33% in US dollar terms, over the corresponding period of 2006-07, though in rupee terms, the exports at Rs. 60351.09 crore represent a small decline of 2.9% over the corresponding period of 2006-07, due to the aforesaid weak position of the dollar.

(b) As per estimates made by Confederation of India Textile Industry (CITI), for every export loss of rupees one crore, there would be a job loss of 34-35 workers. However, no physical quantification of actual job losses, on account of appreciation of the rupee, has been made by CITI.

(c) The Government has announced several relief measures to support the textiles industry, which has been representing that textile exports have been affected by the appreciation of the value of rupee *vis-a-vis* the US Dollar. These measures include the following:—

(i) DEPB rates enhanced by 3% for 9 sectors including textiles (also handlooms), RMGs and handicrafts. For other items, DEPB rates enhanced by 2%.

(ii) ECGC premimum reduced by 10%.

(iii) Amount of Rs. 600 crore released for clearing arrears of CST reimbursement and terminal excise duty.

(iv) Duty drawback rates enhanced by 10-40% of the existing rates.

(v) Subvention on credit rate allowed upto 4% including interest subsidy of 2%.

(vi) Refund of service tax paid by exporters on services linked to export of goods *viz* port services for exports, transport of goods by road from container depot to port of export, general insurance services for insurance of goods for export, technical testing and analysis agency services and inspection and certification services, storage & warehousing services and clearing activity services.

(vii) Customs duty on intermediates for Polyester staple fibre and polyester filament yarn reduced from 7.5% to 5%.

(viii) Customs duty on paraxylene, a raw material for the intermediate PTA reduced from 2% to 0%.

(ix) Customs duty reduced on other man-made filament yarn & staple fibres of acrylic & viscose from 10% to 5%.

(x) Customs duty reduced on spun yarn of man-made staple fibres & filament yarn (other than nylon) from 10% to 5%.

(xi) Customs duty reduced on polyester chips from 7.5% to 5%.

Urban Haats at Bagalkot and Mangalore

3992. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that two proposals for setting up of Urban Haats at Bagalkot and Mangalore in Karnataka submitted to the Central Government for approval and the release of central financial assistance for the same are pending; and

(b) if so, by when they are likely to be approved and financial assistance released?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) Yes, Sir.